

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

Claim 1. (currently amended): A process for producing zinc oxide particles coated directly with a metallic soap, the process comprising mixing zinc oxide particles consisting of zinc oxide with a metallic soap at a temperature equal to or higher than a melting point of the metallic soap.

Claim 2. (currently amended): Coated zinc oxide particles comprising: zinc oxide particles consisting of zinc oxide and a metallic soap coated directly on the zinc oxide particles, wherein the coated zinc oxide particles are produced through the process according to claim 1.

Claim 3. (previously presented): Coated zinc oxide particles according to claim 2, wherein the zinc oxide particles have an average primary particle size of 0.005 to 0.1 μm .

Claim 4. (original): Coated zinc oxide particles according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the metallic soap is a fatty acid salt of at least one metal selected from the group consisting of magnesium, zinc, barium, calcium, and aluminum.

Claim 5. (original): Coated zinc oxide particles according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the metallic soap is a metallic salt of at least one fatty acid selected from the group consisting of

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lauric acid, myristic acid, palmitic acid, stearic acid, isostearic acid, oleic acid, behenic acid, montanic acid, and derivatives thereof.

Claim 6. (original): Coated zinc oxide particles according to claim 2 or 3, wherein the metallic soap is at least one species selected from the group consisting of zinc stearate, magnesium stearate, and calcium stearate.

Claim 7. (canceled).

Claim 8. (currently amended): A thermoplastic resin composition comprising at least one thermoplastic resin and coated zinc oxide particles according to claim 2-~~or~~ 7.

Claim 9. (previously presented): A thermoplastic resin composition according to claim 8, wherein the thermoplastic resin composition is in a form of a compound or a masterbatch.

Claim 10. (previously presented): A thermoplastic resin composition according to claim 8, wherein a mass percentage of an amount of the zinc oxide particles to the whole thermoplastic resin composition falls within a range of 0.01 to 80 mass %.

Claim 11. (original): A molded product formed through molding of a thermoplastic resin composition according to claim 8.

Claim 12. (previously presented): A molded product according to 11, wherein the molded product is in a form of at least one species selected from among fiber, film, and plastic molded products.

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Claim 13. (currently amended): A process for producing a thermoplastic resin composition, the process comprising a step of adding coated zinc oxide particles according to claim 2 ~~or 7~~ to a thermoplastic resin.

Claim 14. (original): A process for producing a molded product, the process comprising a step of molding a thermoplastic resin composition according to claim 8.